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To the American Oriental Society, this Expedition is the more interesting as one of its own members is included in it, the Rev. George Jones, U. S. N., who accompanies the Commodore as chaplain, whose knowledge of the world, gathered on long absences from his native country in our national vessels, and scientific and literary accomplishments, justify the expectation that the Society will hereafter receive important communications from him in answer to a series of inquiries addressed to him by a committee appointed for the purpose, previous to his departure.

E. E. S.



VII. UNITED STATES EXPEDITION TO THE PACIFIC.

We extract from a carefully prepared article in the *National Intelligencer* for November 18, 1852, the following paragraphs relative to the design and equipment of this Expedition, now soon to take its departure, under Commander Ringgold.

"Its objects will be to survey portions of the China and Japan seas, the route between China and California, and the North Pacific ocean in the region of Behring's Straits. It may probably also ascend the Sea of Tartary, to make some examinations needed for the advantageous prosecution of commercial enterprises in those comparatively unknown waters.

"In every particular this Expedition will be thoroughly prepared for the work before it.

"In the scientific departments the same circumspection is manifested. The astronomical instruments are obtained through the National Observatory at Washington, and are of the very best quality. . . . The means of collecting information in natural history have been exceedingly well cared for, even to the most minute particular.

"We understand that this Expedition will probably consume three years in the accomplishment of its varied and important work, and in returning to the Atlantic coast. In this time it will traverse the waters of many of the hitherto unfrequented regions bordering upon the Pacific ocean. On the one side, are the coasts of California and Oregon; on the other, the regions of Kamtschatka and the islands of Japan; in the north, to a very high degree of latitude, the scenes of our adventurous whalers; and in the south, the countless islands of the ocean, so imperfectly known to the civilized nations of the earth, yet many of them inhabited by human beings whose condition challenges our pity, and whose characteristics invite the scrutiny of the learned and the curious.

"One of the most remarkable, and to us most interesting island groups in the world is the Sandwich Islands. They form the natural stopping-place for all the vessels plying between China or Japan and the coasts of California. They are already the established resort of our whaleships, *six hundred* of which have already taken harbor there within a single year, and not a few of them, with the meagre facilities now existing, transferring their cargoes at these ports. In the lapse of but a few years more, they will constitute the great commercial depot of many nations. Through them will pass the tidings from China that will be thence received as news in London some twenty or thirty days later.

"At present, a sail-vessel can make the voyage from Canton to San Francisco in forty-five days; but it is thought that ocean-steamers, which must necessarily touch at the Sandwich Islands, will accomplish it in sixteen, or even fourteen days. The passage from San Francisco to Panama now occupies twelve days. When the railroad shall be completed, the sixty miles transit across the Isthmus will be made in three hours; and thence to New York in eight days. But how long will the Isthmus be the way of transit from the Pacific to the Atlantic shores? Who can tell? The Western States of this Union are neither listless nor idle. They are alive to their interests, and full of enterprise. They will soon connect their mercantile cities with the ports of the Pacific by railroads and telegraph-wires. Before many years shall pass, not only will the Canton news be transmitted by telegraph from San Francisco to St. Louis, and thence to the Atlantic coasts, within sixteen or eighteen days after the occurrence of the incidents at Canton, but chests of tea and bales of silks, by the same conveyance across the ocean, will be there opened within a few brief days thereafter; and St. Louis, a few years ago an unimportant village amidst the wilds of the West, will be the city of commerce and divergence for the choicest products of the Celestial Empire. And sixteen days, it is confidently predicted by many, will be sufficient lapse of time to enable the merchant of New York to read the despatches of his correspondents at Canton.

"Congress has appropriated for this Expedition one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars; a large sum, to be sure, but how small when contrasted with the magnitude of the work to be accomplished!"

While the Government is thus providing for the exploration of the North Pacific, and the opening of the new route of commerce between China and California seems likely soon to bring the United States into intimate relations with the Celestial Empire, and to afford new facilities for increasing our knowledge of that part of the East, some of the islands of Micronesia, in a more southern latitude, are being lighted up, for the first time, by the presence of Christian missionaries,* who, while pursuing their work of benevolence, may be expected to communicate much that will be new respecting the tribes of these countless ocean-isles, their physical and intellectual characteristics, their migrations, their relations to each other and to continental races, and the like, as well as the geography of their island-homes.

A private letter from one of these missionaries to a gentleman in New Haven, alludes to some interesting ruins on Ascension Island, one of the Caroline group, in Lat. 7° N. We are permitted to quote the passage here.

"The past history of this island is full of interest, and much of it wrapped in mystery. There are numerous ruins, here, of what are supposed to be castles. We visited one, the other day, which is truly wonderful. The walls are twenty-five feet high, very thick, built entirely of prismatic rocks, some of them eighteen feet long, and two thick. There are walls within walls, the outer enclosing about one acre, and several very neat vaults, in which human bones, etc., have been found. When, why, and by whom these walls were

* See *The Missionary Herald* for March, 1853.

constructed, will most likely forever remain unknown. Some suppose them the strong-holds of Spanish pirates, which I think is altogether unlikely. We shall hope to make some further exploration, and then shall be happy to communicate any information."

The same letter states that the language of Ascension differs from all others spoken in that part of the Pacific.

E. E. S.

VIII. OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES EXPEDITION TO THE DEAD SEA.

"The official Report of the United States Expedition to explore the Dead Sea and the River Jordan, was published in part by order of the United States Senate, but the manner in which the work was executed was so little creditable, either to the enterprising officers who had charge of it, or to the Government under whose authority it was undertaken, that the late Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Graham, authorized its publication by Lieut. M. F. Maury, Superintendent of the National Observatory, in a more appropriate style. The execution of the work was entrusted to Messrs. John Murphy & Co., of this city, who have recently issued it in a very neat quarto volume, handsomely bound and gilt. The Report, as published by the Senate, consisted only of the narrative portion of the Commander of the Expedition, Lieut. W. F. Lynch; but the geological portion was not included in it, as it was not then finished. The volume, as published by Messrs. Murphy & Co., contains the large and comprehensive map of the Dead Sea and the River Jordan, with the surrounding country, constructed from the joint labors of Lieutenants Lynch and Dale, and Passed Midshipman Aulick, as well as numerous plates of fossil remains found during the geological explorations."—*Baltimore American*.

The geological part of this Report is by our associate Dr. Henry J. Anderson.

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTELLIGENCE.

I. AFRICA.

1. *Philology*.

La Toison d'or de la langue Phénicienne ; collection d'inscriptions puniques trouvées sur les ruines de Carthage et sur divers points de la régence de Tunis, avec la transcription en caractères hébreux et la traduction en Latin et en Français, par l'Abbé Bourgade, aumônier de la chapelle de Saint-Louis, à Carthage, missionnaire apostolique, chanoine honoraire d'Alger, etc. Paris : 1852.

Entzifferung der neupunischen Inschriften, von Heinrich Ewald. Göttingen : 1852.